

## Article - Public Utilities

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§2–203.

(a) The State budget shall provide sufficient money for the Office of People's Counsel to hire necessary staff in addition to the staff assistance that is provided under § 2-205(c)(2) of this subtitle.

(b) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection or otherwise by law, all personnel of the Office of People's Counsel are subject to the provisions of the State Personnel and Pensions Article.

(2) The following are in the executive service, management service, or are special appointments in the State Personnel Management System:

- (i) the People's Counsel;
- (ii) the deputy People's Counsel; and
- (iii) attorneys that are in the management service or are special appointments.

(c) The compensation of the following personnel shall be determined by the People's Counsel and, if possible, in accordance with the State pay plan:

- (1) the deputy People's Counsel;
- (2) attorneys that are:
  - (i) in the management service; or
  - (ii) special appointments; and
- (3) all positions in management, professional and technical classifications unique to the Office of People's Counsel.

(d) (1) At least 45 days before the effective date of the change, the People's Counsel shall submit to the Secretary of Budget and Management each change to salary plans that involves increases or decreases in salary ranges other than those associated with routine reclassifications and promotions or general salary increases approved by the General Assembly.

(2) Reportable changes include creation or abolition of classes, regrading the classes from one established range to another, changes in salary guidelines to administer the pay schedules, or creation of new pay schedules or ranges.

(3) The Secretary of Budget and Management shall:

(i) review the proposed changes; and

(ii) at least 15 days before the effective date of the proposed changes, advise the People's Counsel whether the changes would have an adverse effect on comparable State jobs.

(4) Failure of the Secretary to respond in a timely manner is not considered a statement of adverse effect.

(e) On or before January 31 of each year, the People's Counsel shall report to the Secretary of Budget and Management and, subject to § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, to the General Assembly setting forth all personnel positions, classifications, and salaries in the Office of People's Counsel as of the end of the preceding calendar year.

(f) The Office of People's Counsel may retain as necessary for a particular matter or hire experts in the field of utility regulation, including cost of capital experts, rate design experts, accountants, economists, engineers, transportation specialists, and lawyers.

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